

**SYSTEM, METHOD AND ARTICLE OF MANUFACTURE FOR
INITIATING AN AGREEMENT IN AN E-COMMERCE ENVIRONMENT**

ABSTRACT

A system, method and article of manufacture are provided for initiation of an agreement utilizing a network. First, a buyer and a seller are allowed to negotiate terms of trade utilizing a network. A form is received from the buyer indicating the terms of trade utilizing the network. Also received utilizing the network is an identifier of the buyer. Thereafter, the form is sent to a bank for assessing the credit of the buyer utilizing the network. The bank to which the credit application is sent is based on the identifier. Next, the form is forwarded to a seller along with the assessment of the credit of the buyer. At such time, the seller is permitted to digitally sign the form utilizing the network. The digitally signed form is then received from the seller utilizing the network after which a notice is sent to the buyer indicating that the digitally signed form has been received from the seller, thus initiating the agreement.